

who drops the missile a fair chance of returning to his mate, but out of the shambles it makes at least one woman and one man will escape. Within them they carry the inscrutable instinct for race perpetuation; one couple can become the ancestors of a new generation.

But human life is not civilization. There can be life with little or no civilization; for, conception and the means of subsistence are the requirements for life, while civilization is an added value, an accomplishment, an expression of gregariousness. It is the sum-total of the knowledge, morals and customs prevailing at a particular period of history among any integrated segment of the world's population. When we speak of Greek civilization in the fifth century before the modern era, we refer to the sciences, arts, religion and language which were known to those people, and about which we have learned through the records preserved mainly in the monasteries. Likewise, when an archaeologist digs up a house or a pot we try to reconstruct from these evidences the manner of living of a people long out of sight of, and that manner of living is what we call their civilization. There is a certainty that among the living must be many who owe their existence to the very people about whom we know little or nothing; if "lost civilizations" involved complete extinction of life none of us could be here.

Knowledge exists only in the minds of men. Our libraries are replete with recorded information and thought which to most of us are as unknown as the mysteries of Tutankhamen. During the war just closed our conscription officials, it was reported, came upon Americans who did not know of the close of World War I. The civilization of a people is the knowledge so disseminated and assimilated as to affect the habits and thought of the times, and if the mentality of men are lacking in knowledge, even though a few may have it, it cannot be said to be effective. Thus, the generation of Germans born since 1932 should be, unless taught by those who remember, ignorant of the principles of representative government, and their civilization might be in that respect off-balance. To the generation who will predominate in this country the New Deal is synonymous with Americanism; they know no other kind.

Now, if man is so preoccupied with the necessary business of making a living that even the reading of a newspaper is a tax on his residue of energy, and he must rely on comics for his mental improvement, he is unlikely to pass on to the next generation any of "the best that has been thought and said." When our colleges must conform their curriculum to the task of making ends meet, and students must pass up cultural courses for such as will pre-

vent the widespread and intense the likelihood of a general let-down cannot be denied. "Tobacco Road" is an economic phenomenon; so is the dropping of Latin from college curricula.

Civilization, then, reflects the econ-

omies widespread and intense the likelihood of a general let-down cannot be denied. "Tobacco Road" is an economic phenomenon; so is the dropping of Latin from college curricula. Eleven?—If on the wrapper of this paper, just above your name, you see the number 11, then you know that the October number is the last due you on your subscription. (Unless you subscribed for two years.) Renew now.

## ALBERT JAY NOCK

1873-1945

YOU would ask him about books. Of course you were poaching on friendship, but then, he knew everything that was worthwhile, had an intimate knowledge of those who made books, from Homer to himself, and you were sure he would put you in the way of making a good investment of your reading time. He never failed you. And so, between deliberate bites of his favorite *shish kabob*—the culinary art is also a form of expression an educated man must be acquainted with—he would tell you about a first-rate thing he had just read or re-read (he insisted you never got your money's worth from a single reading); but, unfortunately, the book had not been translated and you swung him to the only language you have a working knowledge of.

By midnight, having had your second glass of beer and a rare-bit, you had collected enough titles to keep you going for a month, if you put in eight hours a day at reading. Also, you had picked up a story concerning Victor Cousins or a tid-bit about Rabelais or something about the social background of Epictetus or Artemus Ward; you wished you had with you some recording machine to take it all down, or at least a memory as good as that of the raconteur. Maybe a passing ankle (he always looked), would remind him of something from the Hebrew Psalms, and when you asked him to translate he would sigh: "If the Jews only knew their own culture."

You told him how hard you found writing, how slow you are at it, and were surprised when he told you that a net output of three-hundred words a day was tops for him. Then you mentioned writers who are so prolific; how do they do it? A pause—he was never in a hurry—and then he asked: "Did you ever read their stuff?" That is about the most cutting criticism of a book you would get out of him: "stuff." You learned after a while that a book he didn't like was one he "didn't understand" or one he "didn't have enough education for."

When you got sophomorically excited over criticisms of his latest book or article, his blue-gray eyes would say to you, in unfeigned surprise, "Is that what they say?" The critics are fine fellows, had a right to their opinions, and maybe they are right in this instance. To live happily you must "never explain, never complain and never argue."

Was he writing anything? Again you were selfish; of his craftsmanship you could not see enough, and his rippling wisdom was always the sedative your current neurosis needed. No, he had written himself out; finished. But one day, about four months ago, he said the publisher had asked for something and he thought he'd do it. Then, "Don't go advertising it; you double-crossed me on my last book, you know." Now, alas, it can be told.

Maybe he would drop down at your office and you would presume to show him a manuscript. If he handed it back with a neutral shrug of the shoulders you knew enough to throw the thing into the nearest wastebasket; there would be no comment. But, if he pointed out that a particular word is "the second cousin of the right word," or told you to watch your punctuation, you knew that a little refurbishing would make the stuff readable. On rare occasions he would say something like, "My friend, if you keep on writing like this you will make me look like Confederate money." He was generous because he was noble.

And now, you are alone.

egrated with the government, have become, as one banker put it, "securities for the treasury"; all of the 43 show a substantial investment in the credit of the United States. If the State were to go bankrupt, were to repudiate its obligations, all these blue-chip concerns would go on the block.

Now, the idea of nationalization usually conjures up a martial picture, of a bayoneted regiment led by a pompous colonel holding a confiscatory order. That was the technique of the Russian revolution and to a large extent of the early Hitler and Mussolini regimes. Even before the war this histrionic method was becoming obsolete; observing the experience of Germany and Italy, our industrialists were beginning to find partnership with the government profitable and let themselves be lured into the finance-method of neutralizing private ownership. The beneficent investments of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation—drawing its funds from the bottomless tax-barrel—not only steadied the wobbling monopolies during the 1930s, but also assured them of financial stability against the hazards of their own inefficiency; come what may, the State acquired a stake in these companies and could not afford to let them fall. Reciprocity called for unquestioning support of the State in all its ventures, foreign and domestic, and particularly in its fiscal program. It was not a conspiracy, just a tacit understanding among practical men.

This nationalizing process was speeded up by the war. The State became the only customer, and of all customers in the world the only one is most right. Credit-checking is no problem. If for the moment its tax policy must conform with political exigencies, its borrowing capacity will make up for any discrepancy between income and outgo. The acceptance of the State's I. O. U.—bonds—is not only wise, it is obligatory. And so it happens that one finds the resources of these billion-dollar organizations loaded with mortgages on the taxing-power of the State. It may shock our sensibilities to refer to this partnership as Fascism, but if you compare the partnership-through-finance with the German and Italian patterns you will find a striking similarity.

How strong is this tie-up between politics and industry? The 43 companies have a total in resources of over one-hundred billions. If all the smaller concerns are counted in, it will be found that nearly the entire national debt—in fact, all but the few bonds temporarily in the hands of housewives—is on the asset side of America's industrial ledger.\* The logical step, at the next crisis, will be for either management to muscle in on bureaucracy or for bureaucracy to become management.

\* 73% of Americans have accumulated 7% of wartime savings. Even the small holdings must eventually land in the laps of the big fellows; unemployment will see to it.